

TORRINGTON
RURAL DISTRICT
1945.

REPORTS
OF THE
**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND SANITARY SURVEYOR**

FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 1945.

GREAT TORRINGTON:
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HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
HODGE'S CHAMBERS,
TORRINGTON.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Torrington
Rural District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

We have pleasure in presenting our ANNUAL
REPORTS for the year ended 31st December, 1945.

We are, Gentlemen,


Yours faithfully,

E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Medical Officer of Health.

F. G. GANE, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

Sanitary Inspector & Building Surveyor.



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Torrington Rural District.

1945

General Statistics.

Area (Acres)	79,793
Population (R.G.)	7,135
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	...	2,223
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£19,399
Sum realised by a penny rate	...	...	...	...	...	£80 6s. 7d.

Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

Live Births ... Male 37, Female 29, Total 66.

Decrease of 37 on previous year.

Birth Rate per 1000 of estimated Population ... 9.4

Deaths ... 71. A decrease of 4.

Death Rate per 1000 of estimated Resident Population ... 10.1

General Sanitary Conditions of the District.

Officials.

The Officials of the District are the Medical Officer of Health, who is a part time official, and a full time Sanitary Surveyor. A Monthly Report is made to the Council.

Nursing.

The District is provided with Midwives and Nurses by Nursing Associations with the help of County Council grants. There also appear to be an increasing number of Inspectors.

Hospitals.

The District is served by Torrington, Bideford, Barnstaple and Exeter Hospitals. Most of these want doubling in size judging from the waiting lists.

School and County Health Services.

Clinics of various sorts are increasing and appear popular.

Isolation Hospital and Infectious Diseases.

Very little Infectious Disease has occurred during the last year. The District is well served by the combined areas Isolation Hospital at Bideford, and Tuberculosis is admirably looked after by the County T.B. Officer, but there is rather a long wait for sanatorium treatment.

Ambulance Service.

The area is served by Ambulances at Bideford and Barnstaple. There is an excellent new one presented to Torrington by its sister town in the United States.

Laboratory Facilities.

The County Laboratory at Exeter provides an excellent service for all examinations and investigations.

Schools.

These are being brought up to date, but can never be good until a main water supply is provided for the area.

Maternity Services.

The District Midwives look after the majority of mothers and there are also visiting Health Visitors. Patients have examination before and after their confinements by their own doctor under a health scheme. In these days of no help being available more and more expectant mothers have to go to hospitals. The County Health Department has made some arrangements throughout the district for this. However, local councils must be prepared to watch the progress of a new adventure as it may be that the planners of the County may try to segregate all prospective mothers into four or five large maternity hospitals, causing inconvenience and discomfort to the patients and their friends. Local hospital accommodation should be provided as far as possible.

Premature and illegitimate children are well cared for under the above services and at the baby clinic.

Dairies and Cowsheds.

These have to a large extent been improved as far as can be expected. They are, however, a motley collection, and a large number want re-building on modern lines and urgently need a main water supply in many cases. Electricity is also another modern necessity which should be installed everywhere.

Housing.

This has been held up during the War, but a big building programme will soon be due, and it is hoped that before this is started an adequate and pure water supply will be found for them at all periods of the year. It seems this was almost impossible in the past!

Venereal Disease.

These cases are few in a rural area such as this. The local clinic is at Barnstaple.

Infestation.

Scabies and lice do not occur in the district except in a very small number of cases and these are diminishing now the exacuees have returned.

Water.

Water is generally bad in quality and quantity. In some parts the water is plumbo-solvent and copper or asbestos pipes have to be used. A main water supply to the whole area is very urgently necessary.

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

Each school is visited once a year and practically all children attending school have been immunised. A check up of those missed at a previous visit is carried out at the same time. Health Visitors now help in trying to get all pre-school age infants brought to the school at the same time, and the percentage of those immunised should be very high by the end of this year.

Annual Report of Sanitary Inspector.

General Inspections.

Dwellings inspected under Housing Acts	...	...	7
Dwellings inspected under Public Health Acts	...	...	47
Re-inspections under Housing Acts	...	...	4
Re-inspections under Public Health Acts	...	...	44
Supervisory visits under the Housing Rural Workers' Act	...	...	40
Keeping of Animals	...	...	2
Offensive accumulations	...	...	3
Enquiries into cases of Infectious Disease	...	...	3
Number of rooms disinfected	...	...	4
Visits to Factories	...	...	6
„ „ Bakehouses	...	...	4
„ „ Schools	...	...	4
Food inspections	...	...	1
Number of Milk samples	...	...	6
Number of Water samples	...	...	24
Building inspections under Bye-laws	...	...	39
Visits to Council Houses	...	...	23
Defective drains...	...	...	19
Drains tested	...	...	10
Rats and mice	...	...	3
Plans investigated	...	...	17
Cowsheds inspected	...	...	63
Petroleum inspections	...	...	13
Dirty houses	...	...	3
Miscellaneous	...	...	339

Work done and nuisances abated at premises (other than Farms and Dairies).

HOUSING.

<i>External.</i>	<i>No. of houses.</i>
Walls repaired	9
Roofs repaired	12
Guttering repaired	4
Downspouts repaired	3
Chimneys repaired	3
Water supply laid on into houses	6
New pumps provided	1
Wells cleansed	3
Well steinings repaired	2
Hot water systems fixed	6
New lengths drain laid	5
Defective drains repaired	3
New inspection chambers	5
Septic tanks repaired	1
New septic tanks	4
New gullies	5
New W.C's.	5
Water supply laid on to W.C's.	2
W.C. cisterns renewed	1
New washing accommodation	3
Outbuildings repaired	3
Houses painted	7
<i>Internal.</i>	
Walls replastered	7
Ceilings replastered	10
Windows repaired	6
Doors repaired	5
Floors repaired	9
Cooking appliances repaired or renewed	21
New sinks	8
New sculleries	3
New bathrooms	7

Work done at Farms and Dairies.

The following improvements have been carried out to 16 premises—

Floors, standings, troughs, etc. concreted	6
Lighting and ventilation improved	3
Walls rendered	4
Drainage improved	3
Approaches improved	3
New cowsheds erected	3
Roofs repaired	6
Walls repaired	3

Housing.

New Houses.

Number of New Houses erected by private enterprise	...	Nil
Number of houses erected by Local Authority	...	2

Housing (Rural Workers') Act, 1926.

Two houses have been reconditioned during the year with the aid of grants under the above Act.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :

(1) (a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	54
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	102
(2) (a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	7
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	7
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	Nil
(4)	Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	54

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	...	54
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

A. Proceedings under Sections 17, 18 and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930.

(1)	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	Nil
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—	
(a)	by owners	Nil
(b)	by local authority in default of owners	Nil

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

- | | | | |
|-----|--|--------|-----|
| (1) | Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied | ... .. | Nil |
| (2) | Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service or formal notices :— | | |
| (a) | by owners | ... .. | Nil |
| (b) | by local authority in default of owners | ... .. | Nil |

C. Proceedings under Sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--------|-----|
| (1) | Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made | ... .. | Nil |
| (2) | Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders | ... .. | Nil |

D. Proceedings under Section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--------|-----|
| (1) | Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made. | ... .. | Nil |
| (2) | Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit | ... .. | Nil |

Short-Term Post-War Housing Programme.

Following consultation with the Parish Councils and Parish Representatives the Housing Committee decided to seek permission from the Ministry of Health for the erection of 88 parlour type houses. The largest number of houses proposed for a single site was eight and the smallest two. Priority for building was given to ten sites at which it was proposed to build a pair of houses as a first instalment as follows :—

Weare Giffard.
 High Bickington.
 Petrockstowe.
 Winkleigh.
 Frithelstock.
 Ashreigney.
 Langtree.
 Merton.
 Dolton.
 Alverdiscott.

CIVIL BUILDING LICENCES.

Licences issued in respect of repairs, maintenance or miscellaneous building work to housing.

No. of licences issued.	Value in £
38	3,942

Licences issued in respect of all building work other than housing.

No. of licences issued.	Value in £
29	1,373

Licences issued for conversions and adaptations by private enterprise to provide additional housing accommodation.

Total value in £	Total No. of family units of accommodation provided
450	1

Infectious Disease.

Three cases of Infectious Disease were notified during the year and disinfection was carried out in each case.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milk Supply.

There are 558 registered Cow-keepers in the District including 89 Retailers. During the year as many visits as possible have been made to cowsheds, and advice has been given on structural alterations and clean milk production. Many of the cowsheds are in an unsatisfactory state, but a number of farmers are anxious to carry out improvements when labour and materials are available to them.

There are 28 Accredited Producers and 3 Tuberculin Tested Producers in the district.

Most of the milk produced in the area goes to two Milk Factories where samples are regularly taken for examination under the National Milk Testing Scheme. Samples are also taken by the County Council from T.T. and Accredited Producers.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Animals intended for human consumption in this area are slaughtered at the Public Abattoir at Bideford, and the carcasses and offals are inspected before allocation.

The only foods condemned during the year were 25 tins U.S. Army rations from one of the Ministry of Food dumps in the district.

Water Supplies.

There are 26 public wells in the district. Samples of water are sent for analysis from time to time. The supplies of some parishes are inadequate in times of drought. The water supply of the district cannot be regarded as satisfactory as most of the wells are shallow wells liable to pollution. It is hoped that a piped supply will soon be made available to all districts.

Plans.

17 Plans were submitted during the year. All were approved by the Council.

Sewage Disposal.

No new sewers or disposal installations have been constructed during the year. The existing arrangements for some of the larger villages, notably Winkleigh, cannot be regarded as satisfactory. The advent of a piped water supply will greatly increase the difficulties and a modern system of sewage disposal will have to be considered. A few sizeable groups of houses are without sewers and arrangements will need to be made for disposal when the piped water supply is installed.

Petroleum and Calcium Carbide Licences.

Two calcium carbide licences were issued during the year and thirteen petroleum licences.

Slaughtermen's Licences.

Fifty-three licences were issued during the period.



